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Containment Plus--

13 November 1985

An Affirmative Strategy

Discussion Paper for a Colloquium

on the Future of Containment

National Defense University

Washington, D.C.

November 8, 1985

by

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There is a disquieting gap between the official statements of United States foreign policy, on the one hand, and, on the other, the current American literature on the subject and the implicit foreign policy agenda suggested by the pattern of American budgets, actions, and failures to act in world politics. Moreover, the gap is widening.

Except in one important particular which will be discussed later, the official foreign policy of the United States is firm in the faith of the gospel according to President Truman and Secretary of State Acheson. That creed was announced nearly forty years ago. It has been followed and developed by the

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United States and its allies with varying degrees of energy, imagination, and success ever since. President Reagan's distinctive amendment to the policy, if it becomes a reality, should be a positive factor in its effectiveness.

But the major theme of the non-official literature and of actual practice is how to retreat from the Truman-Acheson foreign policy. Those who advocate retreat speak in many voices. They rarely tell us how far to retreat. Sometimes they do not speak at all, but simply act. They all have different hobby horses and put special emphasis on different points. Some are less opaque than others. But all their counsel points in the same direction.

What the chorus is saying, over and over again, is that the United States is over-committed; that after Korea and Vietnam the American people will not tolerate military adventures much beyond Martha's Vineyard and Pearl Harbor; that we cannot afford the security expenditures required to keep up with the Soviet Union and its allies, and anyway that our own allies are not doing their share in the common effort. Therefore, the prophets of retreat tell us, we should cut our military budgets, reduce our forces in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, and gradually pull back to our own shores. Some advocate an even more bizarre policy, which they call "unilateral internationalism"--a program which would apparently require the

United States, freed of the tiresome obligations of alliance diplomacy, to protect its world-wide security interests single-handed.

The arguments for retreat are reinforced by the state of the nuclear balance, and by the magnitude and momentum of the Soviet nuclear buildup. For many Americans and Europeans, that phenomenon is alone enough to justify policies of withdrawal, neutrality, and accommodation, which they fondly imagine are available to Europe, Japan, and the United States as an alternative foreign policy. The nuclear-oriented apostles of retreat start with the arresting proposition that "great powers do not commit suicide for their allies." They continue by pointing out that the Soviet-American nuclear balance is such that the United States could never make good on its guaranties; that "extended deterrence" is now a myth and perhaps always was a myth; that Soviet nuclear strength makes it impossible for the United States and its allies to use conventional force in defense of their interests; and therefore that the West should accept the inevitable and make the best deal it can with the Soviet Union.

This paper rejects the arguments for an American retreat to or toward isolation root and branch, in all their protean variety. Its thesis is that for the most permanent and fundamental reasons of national security, the United States

cannot and must not retreat, but on the contrary must go forward. The Truman-Acheson foreign policy should not be abandoned but renewed and improved in the light of the changes which have occurred since the late Forties. The Western objective in this effort, based on prudent policies of allied solidarity, should be not alone the containment of Soviet expansion achieved by aggression, but also, and above all, genuine peace with the Soviet Union.

The United States is not over-committed; its commitments correspond to its geopolitical interests in a world political system where only the United States can lead the coalitions required to protect the world balance of power. The American people are not in the least hysterical in the aftermath of Korea and Vietnam; every election and every serious poll shows that they are staunch, patriotic, and ready as always to support the national interest, if their leaders have the courage to lead and the ability to explain what is required and why. Of course we can afford the costs of national security, and of course our allies are doing their share--far more than most people realize. In any event, the performance of our allies is irrelevant. We have guaranteed their security for reasons of our own national interest, not of philanthropy. As a nation, we cannot afford to allow vast centers of power like Western Europe and Japan to fall under hostile control. And it is ridiculous to imagine that we are incapable of the marginal

effort required to maintain our capacity for nuclear retaliation, the basis for extended deterrence as well as the deterrence of nuclear attacks on the United States itself.

Mr. Gorbachev says his foreign policy goal is what he calls a "modus vivendi" with the United States. By this revealing phrase he seems to have in mind a political condition which would be something less than peace, but somewhat less tense than that of the moment. In short, Mr. Gorbachev is proposing yet another agreement of detente like those which led to such bitter disappointments for the United States after the Soviet-American proclamations of improved relations in the "spirit" of Geneva in 1955 and Camp David in 1959; the moment of euphoria after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962; and the summit meetings and other Soviet-American agreements achieved by President Nixon during 1972 and 1973. What Mr. Gorbachev's modus vivendi means is that the United States and its allies should remain passive while the Soviet Union outflanks them by means of aggressive campaigns of expansion conducted in the first instance throughout the Third World, particularly near strategic choke points and other areas of strategic importance. By such a strategy, they believe, they could achieve a basic change in the balance of world power by bringing Japan, China, and Western Europe under their dominion.

To follow Mr. Gorbachev's use of Latin, a Soviet-American modus vivendi now would be an ignis fatuus, which the Oxford Dictionary defines as a fire of swamp gas, a delusive and bewitching flame leading the unwary into pools and ditches.

The realistic objective for Western policy toward the Soviet Union is not a modus vivendi, like that of 1972 and the other failed agreements of the past, but one committing both the United States and the Soviet Union to peace itself. A condition of peace between the United States and the Soviet Union would require each side to abide scrupulously by the rule of the United Nations Charter against aggression, which President Reagan made the centerpiece of his speech before the United Nations on October 24, 1985. Such a goal is well within the capacity of the coalitions and potential coalitions led by the United States in the Atlantic and Pacific Basins, the Middle East, and Southern Asia. It would build on the strength and good sense of President Truman's containment policy, which has served the nation well in the years since 1947, but go beyond it in pressing for peace with the Soviet Union, rather than waiting patiently for the Soviet Union to break up or to realize how foolish and costly its present policies are. A Western policy built on this principle is the only way to end Cold War, which could easily get out of hand in any one of a dozen flash-points around the world.

## II.

It is important to recall that the policy of containment which is the focus of this conference was not the first but the second post-war policy of the West toward the Soviet Union. The first American policy proposal was one of full cooperation with the Soviet Union in repairing the physical damage of the war and restoring the state system in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. That goal remains and will remain the lodestar of American and Western foreign policy, to be pursued despite all obstacles.

The policy of containment was announced in 1947, two years after the end of the Second World War. During those two years, the hopes and dreams of the war period about the possibility of achieving relations of continued cooperation with the Soviet Union turned to ashes. Above all, it became clear that the Soviet Union had no intention of abiding by the rule against aggression which is the foundation of the state system organized under the banner of the United Nations Charter.

During the war, Soviet-Allied relations were characterized by episodes of nearly unbelievable Soviet hostility. The governments of the United States, Great Britain and France thoroughly understood the nature of Soviet policy. There was great foreboding within the Western governments and a



correspondingly intense determination to make every possible effort to sustain and improve the wartime pattern of Soviet-Allied collaboration. There were high hopes throughout the West that the Soviet government would choose to continue its wartime association with the Western allies. More particularly, it was hoped that the Soviet Union would join its erstwhile allies in managing the state system much as the great powers cooperated in conducting the Concert of Europe during the nineteenth century. Soviet diplomats commented later that if the San Francisco Conference had been delayed for a year, the United Nations Charter would never have been signed. There is nothing mysterious about their observation. As Stalin told Ambassador Harriman near the end of the war, during a conversation in which Harriman was trying to persuade Stalin to accept an American post-war reconstruction loan under the Lend-Lease Act, "We have decided to go our own way."

Stalin's policy was carried out with a vengeance. The Soviet government attempted to seize Greece and the Northern provinces of Iran, threatened Berlin and Turkey, and intervened in Czechoslovakia. It brusquely rejected the Marshall Plan and the Baruch Plan, which offered the Soviets reconstruction loans and nuclear cooperation; took over Eastern Europe, repudiating its promises to hold free elections in that critical area; refused to discuss or modify its policy of indefinite expansion either in Europe or elsewhere in the world; and rejected any

and all proposals to create the decisive great power peacekeeping forces called for by the Charter.

Facing these bleak realities, the West decided to adopt the course of deterring and containing Soviet aggression, and defeating it when necessary, rather than eliminating the Soviet Union's capacity to commit aggression in a more conclusive way. For reasons which reflect the finest features of our national character and of Western culture at large, the Western nations undertook instead to follow the advice of George Kennan's classic article in Foreign Affairs--contain Soviet expansion and give the benign influence of Russian high culture time to mellow the Soviet leadership, in the hope that one day--within a period of ten or fifteen years, Mr. Kennen thought--the Soviet Union would either break up or abandon its imperial ambitions, and settle down to cooperate with the other powers in keeping the peace.

Thus in 1947 the West launched the policy of containment--the foundation for an ambitious foreign policy of economic and social progress, of political solidarity, and of international cooperation in the control of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology.

For two decades, the Western foreign policy developed by President Truman and Secretary of State Acheson was moderately

successful, except in the area of achieving effective international control of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology. It was the engine of reconstruction and economic growth in the capitalist world, the third world, and the world of Communist states, and it sustained an impressive cultural and political renaissance in many parts of the world. But from the beginning, it failed in its most fundamental goal--the restoration of the state system as an effective check on aggression. The West hesitated before the challenge of enforcing the Charter rules against Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe. With some success, it moved to defeat Soviet supported aggression in the Third World, only to discover that successful instances of Western defense--in Berlin and Korea, for example--did not deter further aggression, but simply led to an increase in the intensity and scale of the violence the next time. The Soviet Union did not break up or mellow in the sunshine of Russian high culture, as George Kennan had anticipated. On the contrary, its program of expansion and aggression became steadily worse. Finally giving up hope of achieving Soviet compliance with the Charter rules anywhere, the United States came to rely more and more on what we supposed were bilateral Soviet-American codes of crisis management and crisis prevention.

### III.

The increasing concentration of Western thought on problems of crisis management rather than of foreign policy was a register of defeat--an admission that the expectation of peace of the early post-war period had faded, and that we were in fact living under seige within a contracting perimeter, responding to attack--sometimes--in ways we hoped would be effective without provoking all-out war.

What are the supposed canons of crisis management and crisis prevention on which we have relied to minimize ultimate risks?

The first and most basic is that the armed forces of each side not fire at the armed forces of the other. Manifestly, such a rule should make it easier for each side to avoid war by inadvertence or escalation. The only major exception to that rule, so far, has been the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, when the United States boarded and turned back a Soviet vessel bound for Cuba. The Soviet government did not use armed force to interfere with the Allied airlift which saved Berlin in the late Forties, nor with the flow of supplies and troops to the allied forces in Korea and Vietnam. It has, however, used force with deliberate brutality to sabotage the arrangements

for inspection established in Germany immediately after the Second World War.

In the West, many students and officials once thought that there would be a second tacit rule of prudence in the conduct of the Cold War--that each side would respect certain special security interests of the other. Thus the West did not interfere with the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. But it soon became clear that the Soviet Union would not reciprocate. Instead, it tried to take over Greece, Cuba, Iran, Turkey, and other countries or areas which we thought they had agreed were in our sphere of influence.

During the last twenty years, there have been a number of efforts to develop crisis management and crisis avoidance techniques. The "hot-line," permitting rapid and direct communication between the two heads of government, is one example. Another is the Standing Committee on Accidents at Sea, which has had a positive influence on the number of collisions and near collisions between Soviet and American naval vessels.

The attempt to obtain Soviet-American agreements which could control nuclear weapons in the interest of peace is the most conspicuous of all the American efforts to achieve Soviet-

American arrangements for crisis management and crisis avoidance.

We went through a long period of trial and error in trying to discover the significance of nuclear weapons in war and diplomacy.

In 1945 and 1946, some Americans thought that a single waggle of our nuclear finger would dissuade the Soviet Union from any kind of adventure. Perhaps this was the case in the first crisis of the Cold War, that in Northern Iran in 1946. But the Soviet Union persisted in probing our responses to their experiments in expansion. And it soon became clear that there were many situations in which we would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. In those situations, the Soviets could use conventional forces, guerrillas, terrorism, or subversion to accomplish their purposes, confident that if we resisted at all, we would do so only locally, and only with conventional forces.

During the Fifties, John Foster Dulles announced the doctrine of "massive retaliation," threatening a nuclear response against the Soviet Union as a means of deterring or resisting Soviet-backed aggression in important but secondary theatres of Soviet expansion. The doctrine was stillborn. It was soon apparent that the United States was not likely to use

nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union in situations like Korea or Vietnam, although after several bitter years of warfare two credible nuclear hints did bring the Korean War at least to an armistice. But the same procedure did not work in Vietnam, at a time when the Soviet-American nuclear equation was more nearly in balance and Sino-Soviet rivalry for political leadership in the area had become acute.

During the 1960s, the doctrine of "flexible response" was articulated to govern the role of the nuclear weapon in the defense of Europe and other vital American security interests. It remains the theoretical basis of our policy for the military use of the nuclear weapon.

Ever since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the United States has pressed the Soviet Union to accept rules that might ensure the deterrent stability of the Soviet-American nuclear balance. To the American mind, the Cuban Missile Crisis dramatized the explosive potentialities of nuclear anxiety, and demonstrated the utility of agreements or understandings that might minimize uncertainty about the nuclear forces and nuclear intentions of the other. We took it for granted that the Soviet leadership took the same view of the problem.

The Cuban Missile Crisis remains in many ways the most illuminating and instructive of all the Soviet-American

confrontations since 1945. The nuclear element in the crisis was conspicuous, and its implications remain pertinent.

The focal point of the crisis--eighteen months after the Bay of Pigs fiasco--was the secret Soviet plan to deploy intermediate range ground based nuclear weapons on Cuban soil. The United States had announced publicly that it would not tolerate the Soviet emplacement of "offensive" weapons in Cuba. The Soviet Union had denied that it was preparing to make such a deployment, both publicly and diplomatically. But it was doing so. The United States, with the support of the Organization of American States and of its NATO allies, assembled an expeditionary force of 250,000 troops in Florida, established a partial blockade of Cuba, and intercepted a Soviet vessel approaching the island with a load of missiles. After a round of hectic diplomatic exchanges, agreement was reached and the missiles were withdrawn, although Castro was left in power.

On what legal basis did the United States use a limited amount of force in self-defense? There was no armed attack on the United States, and no threat of an armed attack, nuclear or otherwise. The nuclear balance in 1962 was so favorable to the United States that a direct Soviet attack was inconceivable. Cuba had the legal right to request Soviet assistance in defending itself against possible attack--a concern which had a



certain plausibility in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs affair. Yet the United States and the world generally agreed that a sudden, secret, and deceptive change in the Soviet-American nuclear balance was in itself an illegal act of force justifying a legally appropriate American reponse--that is, a limited and proportional use of enough force to cure the Soviet breach of international law. It is important to emphasize, as Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter pointed out at the time, that the threat against which the United States was reacting in Cuba was primarily political in character, a threat designed to weaken the alliance systems of the United States by means of nuclear intimidation.

The American threat to invade Cuba with conventional forces was credible to the Soviet Union because of the state of the Soviet-American nuclear balance in 1962. The principal moral of the Cuban Missile crisis is that Western conventional forces can be used only with the implicit protection of a believable American capacity to retaliate with nuclear weapons if the Soviet Union should intervene. Thus in 1983, when the United States, France, Italy, and Great Britain landed forces in Lebanon, some experienced American foreign policy experts criticized the move because it might lead to a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union. The critics were in error on the facts, but their argument brings out the relationship between the state of the nuclear balance and our capacity to

use conventional force. In Lebanon as in Cuba, Korea, and Vietnam, the United States could use conventional force because we had the capacity to retaliate against the Soviet Union if it interfered. The Allied debacle in Lebanon was not a response to Soviet nuclear threats. The Allies simply failed to take advantage of an important strategic opportunity.

#### IV.

The link between the nuclear balance and the capacity of the West to use conventional force is the heart of the nuclear problem as a political as well as a military matter. Unless the United States retains a strong nuclear retaliatory capacity, it will be unable to carry out the foreign and defense policies it must pursue to protect the nation's security interests in world politics.

The future of America's nuclear retaliatory capacity is the key issue--indeed the only issue--with which Soviet and American negotiators have been wrestling since the beginning of the nuclear weapons arms control talks in 1969. The goal of the Soviet Union in these talks has been to attain unchallengeable superiority in intermediate range and intercontinental ground based ballistic missiles--thus far the most accurate and destructive nuclear weapons, and the weapons least vulnerable to defenses of any kind. Such an advantage,

the Soviet experts believe, would destroy the deterrent credibility of American nuclear guarantees, and lead the United States to withdraw its forces from Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Far East, and adopt a posture of neutrality in the event of an attack on American allies or other interests. The Soviet nuclear strategy echoes the strategy of Germany in building its high-seas fleet before 1914. The German objective was not to fight the Royal Navy, but to force Great Britain to remain neutral in the event of a war on the Continent of Europe.

Nuclear arms agreements ratifying a Soviet nuclear advantage would facilitate the achievement of the Soviet Union's main strategic objective, the separation of the United States from Europe, and the subjugation of Western Europe, Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Far East as a consequence.

In 1972, when the SALT I agreements were signed, the United States and the Soviet Union had approximately the same number of warheads on intercontinental ground based ballistic missiles, and the United States had a comfortable lead in sea-based and airborne forces. The American capacity for nuclear retaliation was beyond question. In 1985, the Soviet Union has a lead of more than 3.5 to 1 in the number of warheads on ICBMs and a lead of more than 4 to 1 in the throw weight of these weapons. Its sea based and airborne nuclear forces have made

comparable if slightly less spectacular gains. In addition, it has a near monopoly of advanced intermediate range ground-based weapons threatening targets in Europe, Japan, China, and the Middle East. This development occurred during a decade in which the shift in the Soviet-American intercontinental nuclear balance raised serious doubts about our ability to deter attacks against our security interests most fundamental to the balance of power, the independence of Japan, China, Western Europe, South Korea, and the Middle East.

The prospect of a Soviet first-strike capacity--a capacity to destroy a large part of our retaliatory forces with 25 percent or 30 percent of their ICBMs alone--is proving to be a political influence of incalculable power, pushing the United States towards the mirage of isolation and its allies towards the corresponding mirage of neutrality and accommodation. No one in the West has the slightest inclination to find out whether the arcane calculations of a Soviet first-strike capacity would prove accurate if put to the test.

As the Scowcroft Commission concluded in 1983, the United States cannot permit the Soviet-American nuclear imbalance to continue. There are only three ways in which nuclear stability, predictability, and deterrence might be restored: (1) a crash American building program involving MX, Midgetman, cruise missiles, Pershing II, and all; (2) the development of

defensive weapons which might transform the nuclear equation by requiring 80 percent or 90 percent rather than 25 percent or 30 percent of the Soviet nuclear force to execute a first-strike; or (3) an arms control agreement with the Soviet Union based on the principle of Soviet-American deterrent retaliatory equality.

The only significant difference between the Soviet Union and the United States in the Geneva nuclear arms talks between 1981 and 1983, and in the new round of the talks which began in 1985, concerns this crucial issue--Soviet-American equality. The United States has pressed for agreements based on this principle, offering amendment after amendment in the hope of inducing the Soviet Union to compromise; the Soviets have adamantly refused, holding out for what they call "equality and equal security," a phrase that would entitle them to a force equal to the sum of all the other nuclear forces in the world. The Soviet goal in the negotiations is to induce the United States to acknowledge the Soviet Union's "right" to nuclear superiority. That is why they have pressed for the inclusion of British and French forces in the INF talks, although they know that those forces are no threat to the far superior Soviet arsenal, but exist for quite different national purposes. And they hold out for agreements based on the principle of equal reduction--so far primarily in launchers rather than in warheads or throw weight--not reduction to equal levels. The

Soviet approach both in the 1981-1983 INF and START negotiations and thus far in the new round of three-sided nuclear arms negotiations in Geneva would make the crucial Soviet advantage in ground based ballistic missiles even bigger and more intimidating than it is now. And they have the temerity to demand an end of American research and development of defensive weapons, although they themselves are spending more on defense against nuclear weapons than on the manufacture of offensive nuclear weapons.

The public reports on the substance of the new round of negotiations show considerable movement at least in the form of the Soviet positions. The basic Soviet proposal adopts the structure of the American START position which has been on the table in Geneva since 1982. It calls for a reduction of what Mr. Gorbachev calls the number of "nuclear charges" to equal levels on both sides--we must make sure that the word "charges" means warheads, not launchers--with a sublimit providing that no more than a given fraction be in any one category. Of course the Soviet proposal is characterized by fancy arithmetic and peculiar definitions which will have to be dealt with in the negotiations. But the Soviet Union has adopted the American approach. The American position remains what it has been in principle, although it has been modified in detail. It is that the unit of account in the negotiations should be warheads and their destructive quality, not launchers, and that

the outcome must be equality between the two sides, not a Soviet right to a first-strike capacity. Naturally, the significance of these changes in the Soviet position are being carefully explored.

Of course the Soviet advantage in ground based missiles may erode in time if the new weapons for our Trident submarines turn out to be as accurate and as formidable as expected. Again, cruise missiles or other small, accurate, and mobile weapons may guarantee nuclear stalemate, and the development of defensive weapons may in the long run completely transform the nuclear equation as it stands today. But for many years, we shall continue to depend upon deterrence through the threat of retaliation with offensive weapons.

The nuclear arms situation of the last twenty years cannot continue indefinitely. It may be that the variables in the nuclear equation are becoming so numerous, so mysterious, and so complex that the Soviet Union will come to agree that the nuclear component of world politics cannot be managed without Soviet-American cooperation.

We have no alternative but to try for such a goal, but the record since the 1960s offers little ground for optimism. The Soviet objective in arms control negotiations, like the rest of Soviet foreign policy, has not been stability but instability;

not equality with the United States but domination over the United States; not mutual deterrence but American acceptance of a Soviet capacity for nuclear blackmail. There is no objective reason for expecting the Soviet leadership to change this position soon.

But even if we should wake up one morning and discover that the Soviet Union had agreed to a good arms control agreement--an agreement based on the principle of Soviet-American equality in deterrent power, taking offensive and defensive weapons into account--we should have accomplished little. There is no sense in an arms control agreement which promises immunity from nuclear war, but in effect licenses conventional war without limit. Since the most likely cause of nuclear war is escalation from conventional war, such an agreement would be a deception from the start. The United States and the other Western powers would have to maintain a secure retaliatory nuclear capacity in any event, just as they do now.

#### V. What's to be Done?

Obviously, the United States cannot continue to muddle along in the pattern of pure containment. We have waited long enough for George Kennen's prophecy of a Soviet mellowing or a break-up of the Soviet Union to materialize. Forty years of patient waiting is enough. The post-war era is over. The ice



is breaking in the state system. The present is one of those rare historic moments of choice, like President Truman's creative term of office.

What should be done?

If we put aside counsels of despair and surrender, there are two approaches to the problem of Soviet-American relations which have some plausibility at the present time--the approach of a new agreement of detente, a "modus vivendi," as Mr. Gorbechev calls it; and the approach of peace itself, a determination on the part of the Western nations to insist that the Soviet Union give up the practice of aggression and live within its legitimate borders like other states, in conformity to the rules of the United Nations Charter. Secretary of State Acheson put the issue sharply a generation ago in responding to a Soviet proposal for a non-aggression pact with the United States--a hardy perennial in Soviet diplomatic practice. "We already have a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union," Acheson said. "It is called the Charter of the United Nations. Any special agreement between us could only weaken and qualify the influence of the Charter, and we must not follow that road."

Henry Kissinger has put forward the most cogent and realistic sketch of a possible reduction of tensions through a

new Modus Vivendi agreement with the Soviet Union. It is well worth examining in detail.

"For too long," Mr. Kissinger wrote, "the Western democracies have flinched from facing the fundamental cause of tensions, the ground rules the Soviets have succeeded in imposing on the international system. Everything that has become Communist remains forever inviolate. Everything that's non-Communist is open to change: by pressure, by subversion, by guerrilla action, if necessary by terror. These ground rules if not resisted will inexorably shift the balance of power against the democracies."

Mr. Kissinger's article admirably defines the central dilemma of Western foreign policy. He does not concentrate on how to achieve a nuclear arms control agreement with the Soviet Union and other secondary issues. Instead, he directs attention to the primary problem: what to do about the continuing process of Soviet expansion accomplished by the illegal use of force. Unfortunately, the remedy Mr. Kissinger prescribes would make the crisis worse.

As Mr. Kissinger points out, the Soviet Union is pressing us to accept the singular thesis that it is above the law against aggression applicable to all other states. Soviet expansion achieved by direct and indirect aggression is changing the world balance of power. And, unless countered, the increasing Soviet advantage in ground-based ballistic

nuclear missiles and other nuclear weapons will soon make it impossible for the Western nations to resist Soviet aggression through the use of conventional forces. Facing these pressures, the West has "flinched" and is still flinching rather than accept the true character of Soviet policy. For the moment, the West is mesmerized, like a bird confronted by a snake.

As a result, Mr. Kissinger tells us, the international order is lurching toward a systemic breakdown like that of August, 1914. He concludes that unless the Soviet Union and the United States reach agreement soon on viable rules for peaceful coexistence, a major confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States is nearly inevitable, a confrontation neither side could expect to control. The reason such an outcome is so likely, Mr. Kissinger believes, is that the existing ground rules for Soviet-American coexistence are both unacceptable and dangerous.

Thus far, Mr. Kissinger is on solid ground. My disagreement with him concerns the next stage of his argument. To eliminate the threat of an uncontrollable crisis in a nuclear setting, Mr. Kissinger recommends a secret Soviet-American negotiation to achieve "specific agreements that define the true vital interests of each side and the permissible challenges to them." Mr. Kissinger writes, "In the past such agreements have been confined to generalities that

created an illusion of progress. Let us now work on a concrete and definite program."

A substantial fraction, perhaps a majority, of Western opinion agrees with the judgment behind Mr. Kissinger's proposal, i.e., that we lack the power and the will to require the Soviet Union to live in peace with its neighbors in accordance with the United Nations Charter. People of this persuasion therefore seek a "pragmatic" *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union. They advocate a spheres-of-influence agreement which would define a Soviet-American relationship short of peace but less explosive than that of the last 40 years, a deal which they hope would head off the climax Mr. Kissinger rightly perceives as nearly inevitable if present trends continue. Mr. Nixon, for example, calls such a relationship "hard-headed detente."

No American could possibly object to a Soviet-American understanding that would reduce tensions and make the international environment less fragile. Indeed, American and Western opinion has greeted with relief and enthusiasm each proclamation since Yalta that the Soviet Union and the Western powers have achieved such an understanding. But the record of Soviet international behavior makes it obvious that the advocates of yet another *modus vivendi* agreement with the Soviet Union are whistling in the wind. In the small,

dangerous, interdependent, and volatile nuclear world of the late twentieth century, there is no possible state of "detente" halfway between war and peace. Eager as the West is for "detente" and truly "peaceful coexistence" with the Soviet Union, more than 40 years of diplomatic frustration make it apparent that the West can accept no definition for these terms except peace itself: that is, a political condition governed by the rules of the United Nations Charter purporting to govern the international use of force.

Two classes of reasons compel this conclusion: reasons of experience and reasons of analysis.

The United States and the Western nations as a group have reached modus vivendi agreements with the Soviet Union many times since the summit meetings at Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam. They have all failed. Some were general in their language but many were extremely concrete and specific. For example, the Soviet-American agreement of October, 1962, negotiated by Governor Harriman, was crystal clear. In that agreement, the Soviet Union promised us that North Vietnam would withdraw its troops from Laos and respect the neutrality of that unhappy land. Many students of the Indochinese wars believe that President Kennedy's failure to insist on the enforcement of the 1962 Laos agreement led straight to the Vietnam tragedy.

The Indo-Chinese Agreements of January and March, 1973, were comparably "concrete and definite." They purported to provide a great-power guaranty for the enforcement of the Laos Agreement of 1962 and for the rights of self-determination of the South Vietnamese people. Similarly, the Nixon-Brezhnev agreement of May 1972, not only promised Soviet-American cooperation in managing future crises peacefully, but categorically assured us of Soviet support for efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East in accordance with Security Council Resolution 242.

The Soviet Union breached the Middle Eastern feature of the 1972 agreement a month before it was signed by promising Sadat full support for the Yom Kippur War of 1973. And it treated all the other agreements mentioned here as scraps of paper before the ink of their signatures was dry. A high-ranking Soviet official referred to one of the most important of these agreements--the Indo-China agreements of 1973--as a typical attempt by an American President to deceive American public opinion.

Nothing could have been more "concrete and definite"--or more important--than the assurance of free elections in Eastern Europe given us by the Soviet Union at Yalta and Potsdam. President Kennedy once told a Soviet interviewer that there could be no peace between the Soviet Union and the United

States until those promises were carried out. But they have not been carried out. One could list other modus vivendi agreements of the same type: the McCloy-Zorin agreement, for example, the Helsinki Final Act, the statements issued after summit meetings without number. They have all had the same melancholy fate.

It is hard to imagine why the Soviet Union should be more willing now than in the past to fulfill agreements of this kind. The Soviets are still enlarging their lead over the West in most categories of military power. Despite political setbacks in Egypt and in China, they continue to gain politically in many important areas of the world. And they remain convinced believers in the un-Marxist view that the future of world politics will be determined by the correlation of military forces.

But there is an even more fundamental reason why proposals that we try to negotiate a new "detente" arrangement with the Soviet Union are devoid of promise. There is no way in which the United States and the Soviet Union could define and agree to respect each other's national-security interests until the Soviet Union gives up its dream of empire.

The most basic national security interest of the United States is to prevent any one power from controlling the full

Eurasian land mass, a reservoir of power which the coastal and island states, including the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, could not hope to defeat. But the manifest goal of Soviet foreign policy is to gain control of the Eurasian land mass--to achieve hegemony both in Europe and in Asia, and therefore to impose its will in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and many other parts of the world as well. The present foreign-policy objectives of the United States and the Soviet Union cannot be reconciled by negotiation, however secret and ingenious.

The United States has always been conscious of its geopolitical interest in opposing hegemonial power in Europe and in Asia. When Napoleon invaded Russia, Thomas Jefferson saw at once, despite his strong sympathies with France and the French Revolution, that a French victory over Russia would endanger the United States. The same perception led the United States to fight in the two world wars of this century in order to prevent Germany from dominating Western Europe and Russia. And we helped organize NATO in 1949, and have participated in its activities ever since, to keep the Soviet Union from achieving the same end. The identical principle led us to fight in four Asian wars since 1898 and, more recently, to guarantee the security of Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand, Thailand, and Pakistan. Modern Japan is obviously a vital security interest



of the United States exactly as Western Europe is, and for the same reason: to keep so great a center of power independent. Korea is important in itself and vital to the defense of Japan. Europe could be outflanked and neutralized from Soviet bases in the Middle East. The United States and its allies and associates must oppose hegemonial power in Asia and the Middle East as well as in Europe. The world, after all, is round.

In trying to deal with the dynamic process of Soviet expansion, now extending to every corner of the globe, can any geographical areas be listed in advance as beyond the possible security concerns of the United States? In recent years we have perceived significant if not vital threats to our national interest in Central Africa, Afghanistan, South Yemen, and Thailand as well as in Central America and East Asia. In the context of the Soviet Union's flexible strategy of expansion, these perceptions were well founded. As Alexander Hamilton pointed out in Number 23 of the Federalist, the circumstances which may threaten the safety of nations are infinitely varied. They cannot be defined in advance with precision. We should avoid the temptation to try.

The United States and most other nations of the world want an open state system of sovereign and independent states, conducting their affairs autonomously in accordance with the rules of international law. The Soviet Union is still pursuing

a course of indefinite expansion achieved by aggression, a policy which can end only in dominion or disaster. The relation between the United States and the Soviet Union is therefore like that between Great Britain and the nations which bid for dominion between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries: Spain in the time of Philip II, France from the age of Louis XIV to that of Napoleon, and Germany in the first half of this century. Now, in a global state system which is no longer Euro-centered, the Soviet Union is seeking mastery with the aid of the nuclear weapon, more specifically, with the political aid of a visible and plausible first-strike capacity against the United States. Of necessity, the United States must be what Great Britain was for so long, the arbiter of the world balance of power. There is no other nation or combination of nations which could offset the Soviet nuclear arsenal and other aspects of Soviet military power as a paralyzing and neutralizing political force.

A modus vivendi of the kind Mr. Kissinger recommends would involve a narrowing of our present defense perimeter, perhaps a radical retreat. At a minimum, it would result in an agreement through which the Soviet Union would promise to withdraw from the Western Hemisphere in exchange for the neutralization of Western Europe and Japan, and therefore the withdrawal of the United States from the Middle East and Southern Asia.

But we cannot retreat to a narrower perimeter of defense without allowing a catastrophic and nearly irreversible change in the world balance of power to take place. In the nuclear age, peace really is indivisible. The "Balkans" detonating the contemporary state system could be Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Korea, or Southern Africa as it once was Sarajevo, Manchuria, Abyssinia, and Spain. If the United States tries to retreat to isolation and neutrality, a Soviet-dominated world system would emerge automatically. It is a fantasy to suppose that such a system would tolerate American individualism and American freedom.

## VI.

If the foreign policy we have employed since 1946 has resulted in a great increase in the power and aggressiveness of the Soviet Union and a corresponding decline in the security of the United States and the Western world more generally, and if a new modus vivendi agreement would have even less promising prospects than its predecessors, what should be done to rectify the situation?

The cure for the crisis, in my judgment, is to create or re-create the state system in whose stability and successful functioning every state has an equal and inescapable interest, the state system posited by the United Nations Charter. One of

the many great advantages of such a system is its political neutrality. Its rules protect East Germany as categorically as they protect South Korea or Israel. Such an international order could only be based on a stable balance of world power. There are no shortcuts to this goal, no cheap substitutes for directly addressing the problem of Soviet aggression. Spheres-of-influence agreements, arms-control agreements, economic carrots and sticks, and other half-measures are a snare and a delusion unless they are backed by arrangements of collective security to protect the balance of power.

A first step to this end, after suitable consultations, would be to supplement President Truman's policy of containment, the cornerstone of Western foreign policy since 1947. Concretely, this would require President Reagan to inform Mr. Gorbachev that unless the Soviet Union gives up its policies of aggression, the United States and its allies will have to reconsider their own commitment to the Charter rules.

Perhaps such an approach should not be described as a "supplement" to the policy of containment but a new emphasis in applying it. After all, Mr. Kennan's article recommended that we counter "the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy" by "the adroit and vigilant application of counter force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points." Whether Mr. Kennan meant that we should counter Soviet policy

only by policies of pure defense or go further is in a sense irrelevant. The pattern of American action in carrying out the Containment policy has been negative and constrained. What is required now is a policy that could induce the Soviet Union to abandon of aggression as an instrument of national policy.

The Soviet practice of aggression is eroding the political foundations of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, the basic organizing principle of the state system since the Congress of Vienna. The Charter prohibits any international use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of a state, save for purposes of individual or collective self-defense. As a rule of law and a political principle, this prohibition must be generally respected or it will not be respected at all. The state system cannot function under a double standard. Unless the Soviet Union gives up the practice of aggression, it cannot expect other states to regard Article 2(4) of the Charter as the Eleventh Commandment. Adlai Stevenson said a generation ago that we will not stand by and be nibbled to death. When Alexander M. Haig was Secretary of State, he warned that continued Soviet violations of Article 2(4) would deprive the provision of all influence over the behavior of states. And Secretary of State Shultz commented in February 1985, in a speech at the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, that it was ridiculous for the Soviet Union to claim a right to send arms and men to fight against the authority of

a state and then object if the United States did the same thing.

This is not a development the United States wants. On the contrary, such a development would violate every precept for which the United States has labored in world politics for two centuries. But it will come, inevitably, if world politics are governed by instincts of self-preservation rather than by the rule of law.

The step recommended here is not to be undertaken lightly. It would be worse than useless if it were considered to be a bluff. And it will not be easy or cheap to carry out. But, in my view, it is the only course available to the United States and the West. The Soviet Union will not be swayed from its course by sweet reason alone. It will undertake to live under the Charter rules only when it is convinced that all the alternatives are less attractive.

President Reagan's address of October 24, 1985, to the United Nations General Assembly takes a long step toward making this policy explicit. It describes the basic cause of tension between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world with indispensable clarity and candor: the cause of tension is Soviet aggression throughout the world, the President said, not simply the problem of reaching a nuclear arms agreement. The

arms race and the special intricacies of the nuclear weapon are not causes but symptoms of the underlying problem. The President invited the Soviet Union to join the United States in seeking to settle some of the most acute conflicts now raging around the world in accordance with Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which he quoted.

The prospect of a Soviet-American summit meeting later this month is generating enormous political pressures on President Reagan. Those pressures reflect the natural yearning of the Western peoples for an end of the Cold War. It remains to be seen whether the President will yield to those pressures by accepting Mr. Gorbachev's offer of a partial *modus vivendi*, or continue to insist that there is no possible basis for true detente between the Soviet Union and the United States save reciprocal respect by both nations for the rule of the United Nations Charter against aggression.

A policy to achieve peace cannot be fulfilled in a moment, or in six months. There is much damage to be overcome before it could become effective. But the most important component of social cohesion, as social philosophers in the tradition of Montesquieu and Ortega y Gasset have perceived, is not a shared past but a shared vision of the future. Lord Carrington recently warned that the greatest weakness of the Western

alliances today is precisely that they lack a shared vision of the future and agreement on practical means for achieving it.

The nature of the choice before the United States, its NATO and ANZUS allies, Japan, China, and the many other nations which share the American desire for a genuine peace was well formulated some years ago by Sinnathamby Rajaratnam, then Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, in these terms: "Unless the Soviet challenge is made the core of United States foreign policy and met with the same resolve and sense of realism that the Soviets bring to their cause, then a Pax Sovietica is a high probability in the 80's. This is not what we in Asia want, but if that is the only item on the shelf that is what we shall have to settle for."



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